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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NEW DELHI 002521

SENSITIVE
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DEPT FOR SCA/INS

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SUBJECT: BREAKING THE STALEMATE IN NEPAL: INDIA DOESN'T
TRUST THE MAOISTS

REF: SECSTATE 119813

Classified By: Political Counselor Uzra Zeya for reasons 1.4 (B,D)

11. (C) SUMMARY: In response to reftel demarche Indian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MEA) Director (North) Sanjiv Ranjan told us on December 16 that India has conveyed to all concerned parties the need to build consensus, but has not bought into the "flexibility argument" which the GOI perceives as a call on the government of Nepal to accommodate the Maoists. The GOI is deeply suspicious of Maoist intentions and commitment to multi-party democracy. India is disappointed in UNMIN's performance but sees no alternative to renewing its mandate in January. END SUMMARY.

GOI Encourages Consensus, Democratic Principles in Nepal

12. (C) In a December 16 meeting with Indian MEA Director (North) Sanjiv Ranjan, we urged New Delhi to use its influence to encourage all political parties in Nepal to demonstrate flexibility in reaching a political agreement to conclude the peace process, and sought India's views on UNMIN's mandate and extension. Ranjan told us that India has emphasized to all concerned parties in Nepal - including the Maoists - the need to build consensus, but he maintained that such decisions are Nepal's to make. Because of Nepal's sensitivities it was important to deliver messages appropriately by avoiding the appearance of direct advice. From India's perspective, the argument that political parties must be flexible in reaching a compromise seems like code for accommodating the Maoists and sends the message that the Maoists are in the right. "The flexibility argument undermines the principles of democracy," Ranjan asserted. "The Maoists are the ones who need to show flexibility," he asserted, pointing out that Prime Minister Nepal had offered to include them in the government but the Maoists declined.

13. (C) Ranjan expressed India's doubts about Maoist intentions and said that India blames them and their "unclear agenda" for the lack of progress on the peace process. He asserted that the Maoists' only goal is to lead the government, despite the fact that they do not have a true majority. He expressed concern that if the deadline for

constitution drafting is not met, Nepal might declare an "emergency." It wasn't clear what the procedures for an "emergency" would be or to whom leadership would fall, and Ranjan expected that the situation in Nepal would worsen in that case.

Disappointed with UNMIN, but Extension Inevitable

14. (C) India is disappointed in UNMIN's performance, but sees the January extension as inevitable. Ranjan told us that UNMIN is useful because it sends the message to Nepal that the international community is watching. He emphasized, however, that an open-ended mandate is undesirable and that the international community shouldn't be "held hostage by the Maoists' delay tactics." Ranjan detects an increasing sentiment among Nepal's political classes that being anti-India and anti-U.S. is a "credential" for being pro-Nepal. The government of Nepal fears being undermined by other countries dictating its progress. In that sense, the UN umbrella is an important tool for the international community. He refrained from comment on whether broadening UNMIN's mandate could be helpful, but said personalities within UNMIN could be an issue. He suggested in an oblique manner that UNMIN chief Karen Landgren has developed "sympathetic feelings for the underdog" i.e. Maoists. He added that the process needed to be driven by Nepalis themselves.

Concern About Maoist Intentions

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15. (C) Ranjan highlighted many incongruities in Maoist arguments that trouble India: how does their call for civilian supremacy mesh with their constant obstruction of the government; if the Maoists want democracy, why don't they support the government's speedy conclusion of constitution drafting and new elections; why haven't the Maoist cadres been reintegrated, and why does it seem that the Maoists are still encouraging violence? Ranjan relayed to us that India sees the Maoists as the most organized political party, and many in India believe the Maoists' strategy is to keep all of the nation's political energy engaged in the capital while they garner support around the country, all the while maintaining their cadres in cantonments in case they are needed. There is suspicion in India that the Maoists are still engaging in violent and criminal activity, particularly through the Youth Communist League.

16. (C) COMMENT: India is willing to work with the Maoists as representatives of the GON, as illustrated by India's reception of former PM Dahal during his tenure. However, India is deeply uncomfortable with and suspicious of Maoist intentions and will need to see them contribute to real progress on the peace process before it will be willing to use its influence to help bring them back into the government. Based on Ranjan's comments, it is unlikely that India will oppose the extension of UNMIN, but would prefer it to be the final extension. It is doubtful that India will support a broader mandate for UNMIN as the perception here is that UNMIN has been ineffective.

ROEMER